STAR WARS
DOCTOR APHRA
MARVEL
024
SPURRIER
WALKER
DEERING
TARTAGLIA

THE CATASTROPHE CON
Part V

Doctor Aphra's greed for an ancient lightsaber guarded by a swarm of Force-powered hookspores has doomed Accresker Jail! Under Imperial interrogation she has revealed their existence in an attempt to keep her darkest secret: knowledge of Darth Vader's plot to supplant the Emperor.

Fearing contagion, the Empire has abandoned the jail on a collision course with a nearby planet. In order to escape with Magna Tolvan, Sana Starros and the shape-shifter Lopset, Aphra has struck a deal with vigilante Tam Posla.

But Aphra is determined not to leave empty-handed. And other enemies far more dangerous than Posla may have caught wind of her current predicament....

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Accresker Jail.
On Collision Course With Rebel Stronghold Tiferep Major.

ALL RIGHT--TEN MINUTES TO THE *KABOOM*.

I DIALED DOWN THE GRAVITY *LOW ENOUGH* SO THIS POD CAN GET OUT--BUT IT *WILL* BE A ROUGH RIDE.

SO BUCKLE UP *TIGHT*, THE PAIR OF YOU.

SINCE WHEN DID *YOU* CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S COMFORT, APHRA? GET YOUR *OWN* BUTT STRAPPED IN FIRST.

LISTEN, SANA--YOU PROMISE YOU WON'T LET THE REBELS HURT *TOLVAN?* IT'S NOT FAIR *SHE* PAYS FOR MY MESS.

YOU PICK SOME *WEIRD* TIMES TO GROW A *CONSCIENCE*, LADY.

FINE. *YES!* I PROMISE YOUR LITTLE *IMPERIAL PET* IS SAFE.

GREAT.

ZZP

SAFE *FLIGHT*, LADIES.

NRRRRAAA--!
CHNK!
WAIT-- WHAT'RE Y--
Nine Minutes To Collision.

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...LET ME DO THE TALKING.

TAM POSLA CAN BE KINDA... INTENSE.

OKAY, LOPSET...
YOU NEED ME TO SHAPE-SHIFT INTO DOCTOR EVAZAN, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE USING ME! LIKE PEOPLE ALWAYS DO!
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "EVIL'S JUST A MEASURE OF HOW MUCH YOUR CHOICES TAKE AWAY OTHER PEOPLE'S"?
YOU STILL HAVE A CHOICE. YOU EITHER GET USED, OR WE ALL DIE. WELCOME TO THE GALAXY, LOP.
WHY COULDN'T WE JUST GO WITH THE GROUCHY REBEL?! YOU SAID THIS GUY HATES EVAZAN! W-WHAT IF HE SHOOTS ME ON SIGHT?
NUH-UH--TAM POSLA'S ONE OF THOSE "TIME CONSUMING AND EXPENSIVE TRIAL FIRST, SHOOT LATER" KINDA GUYS.
HE'S THE MOST HONORABLE IDIOT I EVER MET...
SSSSSSSS.
"...I'M SORTA COUNTING ON THAT, ACTUALLY."
WH-WHAT IF I GIVE THE GAME AWAY? I'M A TERRIBLE LIAR!
LISTEN, YOU SAW THAT CREEPY BRAIN SQUID UPSTAIRS, RIGHT? THE BOR? ALWAYS EATING MEMORIES... IMPLANTING NEW ONES...
YOU WANNA KNOW HOW THE IMPS STOP IT FROM MESSING THINGS UP WHEN THEY SHIP IT AROUND?

Seven Minutes To Collision.

AND I BROUGHT THE SADISTIC MUTILATOR YOU REQUESTED, Y'BIG WEIRD MONOMANIAC! ISN'T IT NICE WHEN EVERYONE STICKS TO THE PLAN?
HE'S STILL ALIVE. GOOD.
SO, UH-- WE'RE ALL SQUARE? JUST LIKE THAT?
WHRR CHNK
...
DID YOU KILL MY PARTNER? DID YOU MURDER CAYSIN BOG?
WOULD IT CHANGE THINGS IF I DID?
NO. I WOULD HONOR OUR AGREEMENT, AS IS RIGHT. BUT--
--HAVING DONE SO?
I WOULD PURSUE YOUR PUNISHMENT WITH EVERY SINEW OF MY BEING.
SSSSSSUCH BEAUTIFUL FOCUS... OHHHHHHHHHHHH A HOST AT LAST AT LAST...

I MUST MERGE WITH YOU!
TOLVAN?
YELLOW BUTTON! NOW!
RSSSHT!
WHAT IS THAT?
EH. IT'S YOUR BASIC FLASH-FROZEN PSYCHIC BIOHAZARD DESPERATE FOR A PHYSICAL HOST BODY, WHICH--
...
...ACTUALLY, Y'KNOW WHAT? DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'S BEEN A WEIRD COUPLA DAYS.

"YOU DON'T WANNA BE HERE WHEN THIS JUNKYARD LANDS."

OH, CAYSIN...

Five Minutes To Collision.

HRM. NO. OF COURSE NOT.
THAT IS CLEARLY AND PLAINLY THE FROZEN BODY OF DOCTOR CORNELIUS EVAZAN.
CLEARLY.

SHIP-- DIVERT ALL POWER TO THE HEATING ARRAY.

DO YOU THINK HE'LL REALIZE?
WHO CARES? BY THEN WE'LL BE LONG GONE IN THE SHUTTLE HE BROUGHT.

ALSO EXCEEDINGLY RICH.
Y'KNOW-- BETWEEN US? I WASN'T SURE THE HOOKSPORE SWARM WOULD VACATE OUR POOR DEAD JEDI PAL HERE--EVEN FOR A SHOT AT INFESTING POSLA INSTEAD.
BUT--HEH. IT'S LIKE I SAID.

ISN'T IT NICE WHEN EVERYONE STICKS TO THE PLAN?
THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT? ALL THIS MADNESS. ALL FOR A SHINY TOY.

I KNOW AT LEAST FIFTY RICH PSYCHOS WHO'LL PAY TOP CRED FOR A LIGHTSABER THIS OLD. AND HEY, I DID TRY TO GET YOU OUTTA HERE SAFELY.
=SIGH= LOOK, IT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME YOU'RE AN AVARICIOUS WORM, APHRA. THAT'S ALREADY A MATTER OF RECORD.

WHAT SURPRISES ME IS HOW LITTLE YOU VALUE YOUR OWN LIFE.

WELL--COME ON. AWFUL YOU MAY BE, BUT I APPEAR TO HAVE MISSED THE DAY THEY TAUGHT ROMANTIC JUDGMENT AT THE ACADEMY, SO I'M STUCK WITH YOU.
BESIDES-- THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PLACE THAT KEEPS ATTRACTING EVEN WORSE MONSTERS.
AND I THINK WE'VE TRASHED ENOUGH ESCAPE SHIPS TO LAST A LIFETIME.
Three Minutes To Collision.

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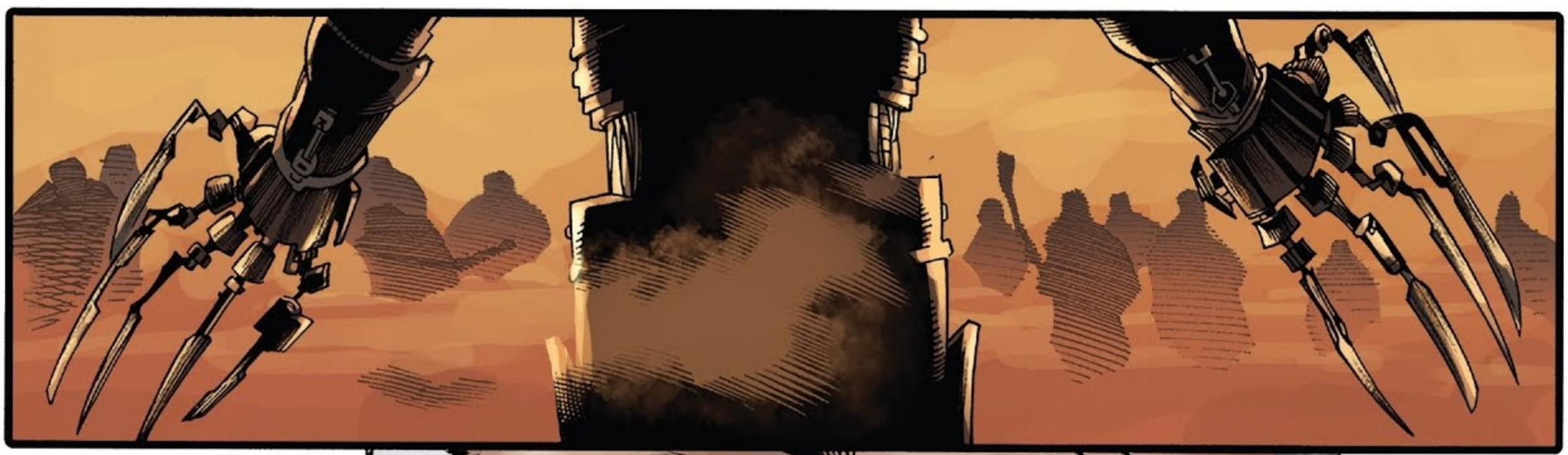
--THEY WANT ME ALIVE.
BLEEP
BUT--IT'S JUST SOME DUMB ASTROMECH DANGLING FR--
FOOM FOOM FOOM
DON'T LOOK BACK. M-MOVE!
DON'T LOOK BACK!
W... W...

م
MOVE.
MOVE. MOVE. MOVE.

APHRA, IT'S-- IT'S FINE. WE'RE OUT OF THE ASTROMECH'S RANGE.
THERE'S JUST SOME WADDLING PROTOCOL DROID HUMMING A TUNE. A-AND LOOK--

--THE OTHER CONVICTS'LL TEAR IT APART ANYWAY. THEY'LL--THEY'LL STEAL ITS SHIP!
WE OUGHT TO GET BACK THERE AND--



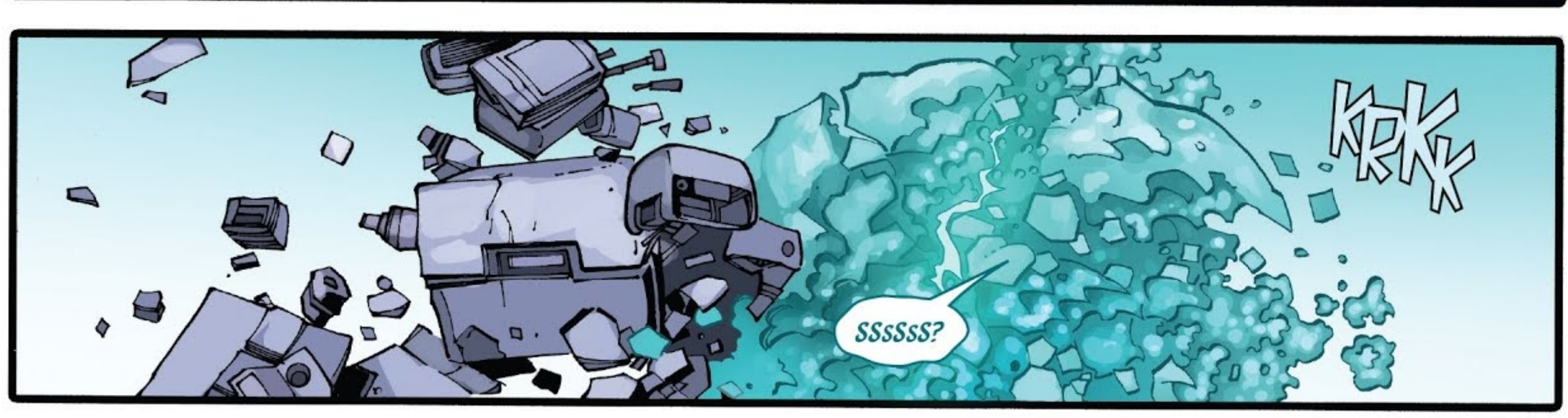
AAAAGH! YAAAA--!
NO NO NOO--AAAGH!

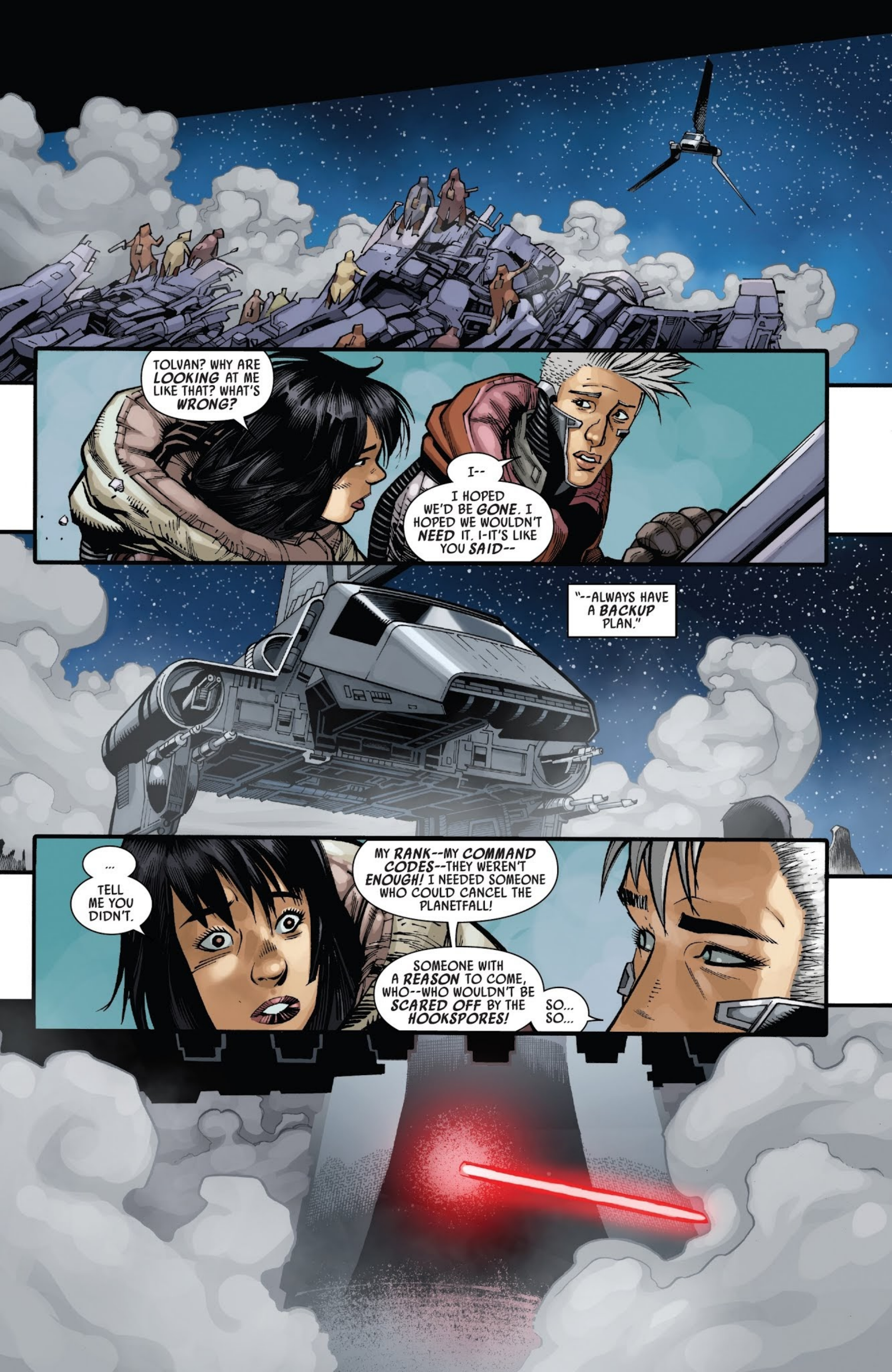
WE NEED TO HIDE! WE NEED TO RUN!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO LOOK BACK.

=SIGH= NOT THAT IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE.
DAMN YOU, TRIPLE-ZERO.

"WE'RE OUT OF *TIME*."

Planetary Collision
In 10... 9... 8...




TOLVAN? WHY ARE LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT? WHAT'S WRONG?
I--
I HOPED WE'D BE GONE. I HOPED WE WOULDN'T NEED IT. I-IT'S LIKE YOU SAID--
"--ALWAYS HAVE A BACKUP PLAN."
...
TELL ME YOU DIDN'T.
MY RANK--MY COMMAND CODES--THEY WEREN'T ENOUGH! I NEEDED SOMEONE WHO COULD CANCEL THE PLANETFALL!
SOMEONE WITH A REASON TO COME, WHO--WHO WOULDN'T BE SCARED OFF BY THE HOOKSPORES!
SO... SO...

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I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY. THERE WAS NO OTHER--
WAIT.

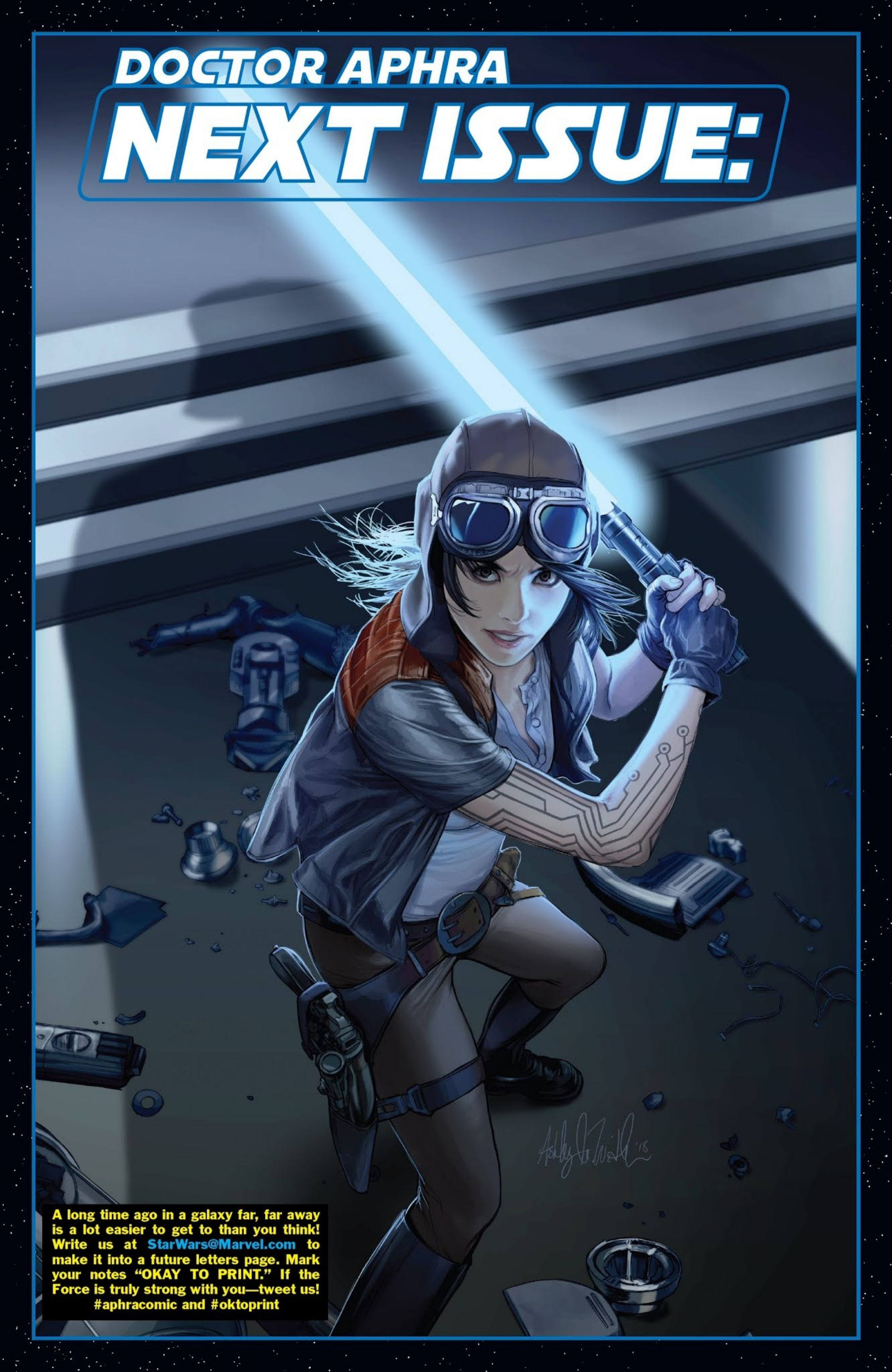
HAHA HAHA!
WHAT'S FUNNY?
SORRY. HAH. IT'S JUST. IT'S KINDA RIDICULOUS WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

I SPENT YEARS THINKING THE SMART WAY TO SURVIVE WAS LEARNING THINGS AND GETTING GOOD AT STUFF.
NOW EVERYONE WANTS TO KILL ME FOR IT.

TURNS OUT IT'S A HELLUVA LOT EASIER TO MAKE PEOPLE CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW THAN WHO YOU ARE.
I CARE! I CARE WHO YOU ARE!

YEAH. YOU'RE SWEET.
PROBABLY DOOMED. AND NEARLY AS MESSED UP AS ME. BUT SWEET.
LISTEN, SIR-- A GALAXY LIKE THIS? KNOWING THINGS-- HAVING GIFTS--IT JUST MEANS YOU'VE GOT TO PICK A SIDE. THE LIGHT OR THE DARK. AND--HONESTLY?
I WAS NEVER A GREAT FIT WITH EITHER.
=SIGH= THE ONLY WAY I FIGURE THIS DOESN'T END WITH ME TORTURED TO DEATH AND YOU KILLED AS COLLATERAL--
--IS IF MY HEAD HAS NO VALUE.
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
I'M SAYING I'M TIRED, SIR. AND I'M SCARED. AND I CAN'T KEEP BEING ME FOREVER.

SO I NEED YOU TO ERASE MY BRAIN.
To Be Continued!


DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:
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